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204

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PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

After learning he could potentially be married, Jim rushes to the aid of Sara, who is being bombarded by paparazzi. In his absence, he assigns Marc to locate "his wife".

Meanwhile, in Minsk, Belarus Malebolgia begins collecting what is rightfully his. And in another part of town, Clown enlists the help of the Old Guard to "test" Jim and the costume's abilities.

In an attempt to evade the paparazzi, Jim and Sara get caught in a swarm of photographers. In all the chaos, an unfortunate bus accident occurs, and Jim is plagued with the decision to save the life of the dying man who harassed Sara.

image
TODD McFARLANE
PRODUCTIONS
SPAWN.COM

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WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD?! HE NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO SOMETHING! SO DON'T YOU DARE STAND THERE AND TELL ME YOU'RE WILLING TO LET HIM **DIE!**



YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN THAT.

SO-- WHAT'S WRONG?

WE DIDN'T DO THIS. THEY DID. **ALL OF THEM!** CROWDING AND PUSHING EACH OTHER--THE WAY THEY TREATED YOU--LIKE A PACK OF WOLVES! *

IT'S NOT ABOUT THAT.

IT'S ABOUT HIM.

* See last issue--Todd

YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND SAY THAT!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!



BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T TRY SOMETHING--I PROMISE YOU--HE'LL DIE.

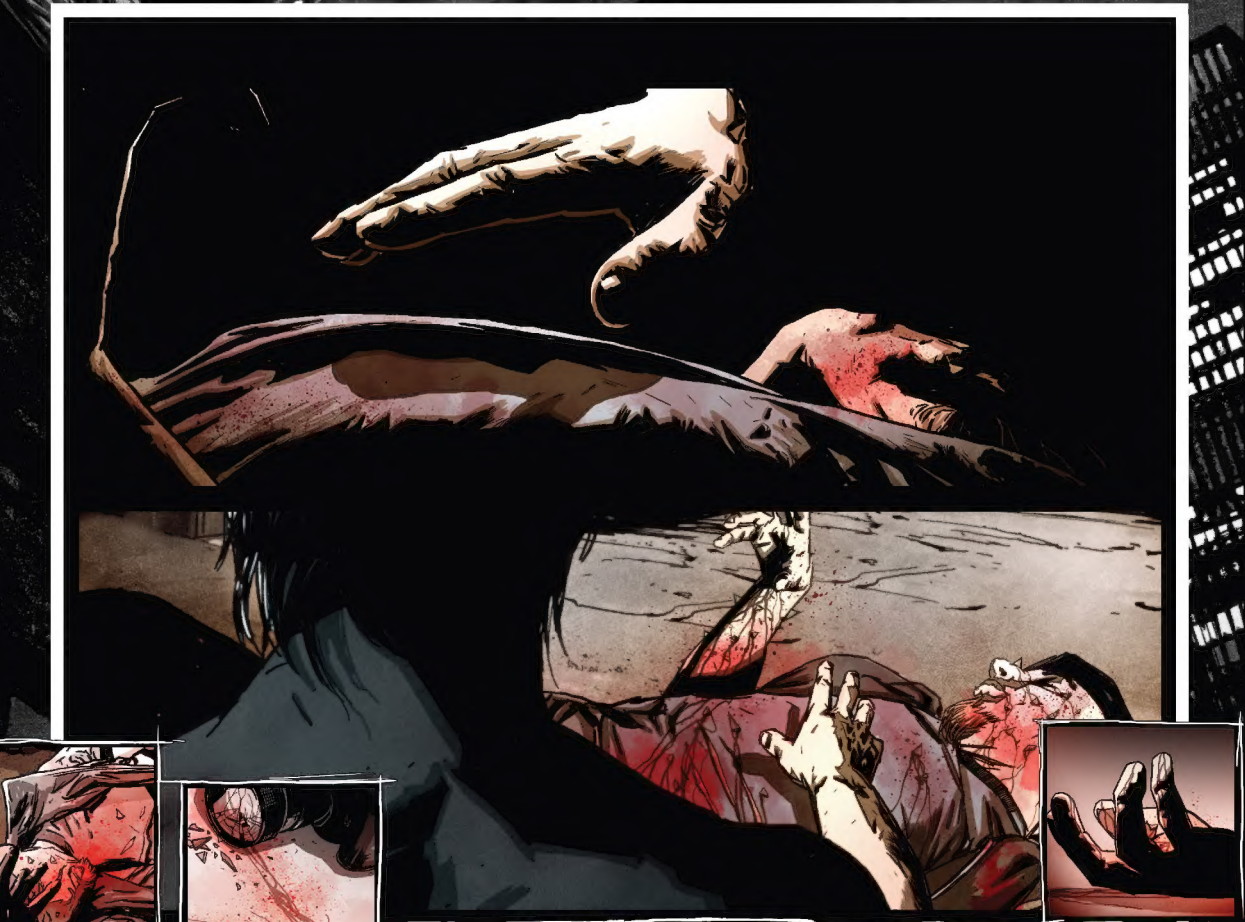
SO WE'RE BEYOND WHAT THEY DID TO ME. LET THAT GO.

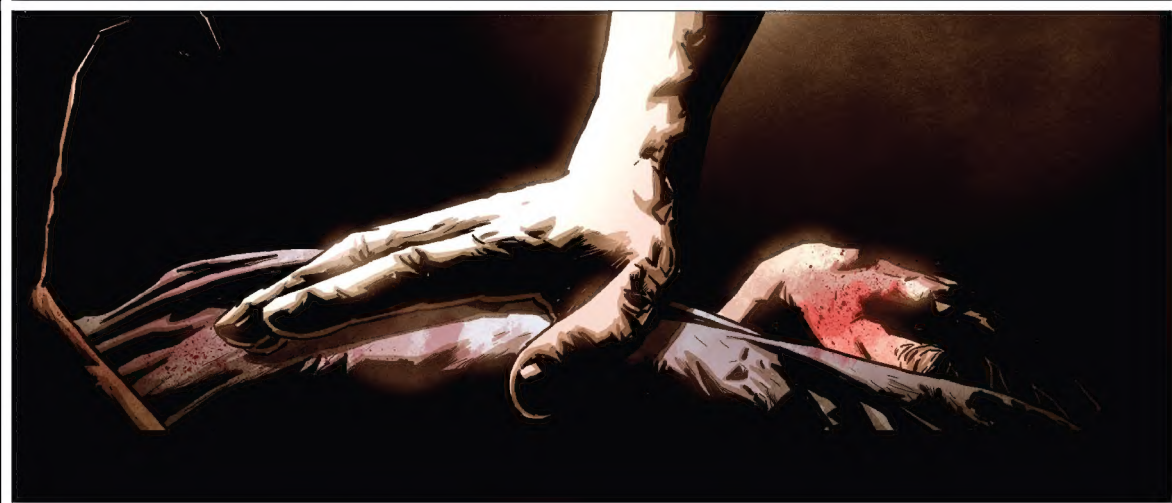


LISTEN TO HER, MAN. YOU HAVE TO TRY.











COME ON!

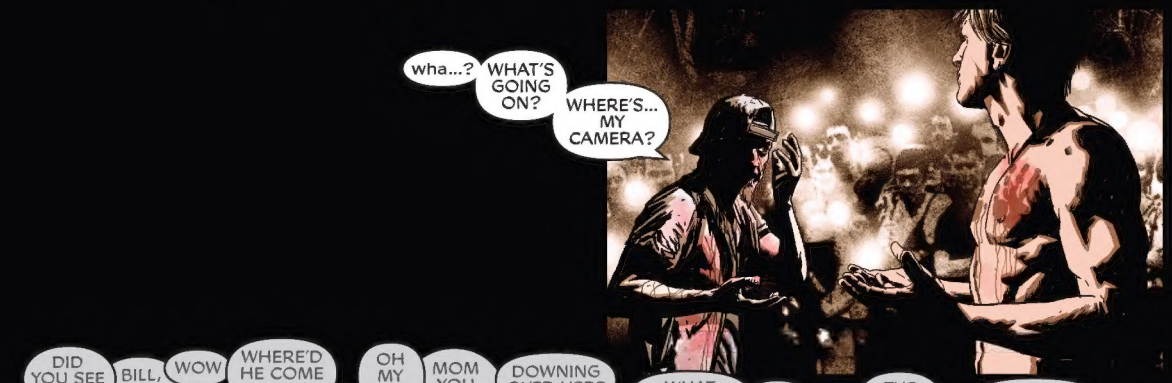
GODAMMIT!
WORK! WHY
WON'T IT...

WOORRRKKK



klik
klik
klik
snap
klik
snap
klik
klik

klik
snap
klik
klik
klik
klik
snap
snap
klik



wha...? WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHERE'S... MY CAMERA?
DID YOU SEE THAT
BILL, YOU GETTING THESE SHOTS
WOW
WHERE'D HE COME FROM
OH MY GOD
MOM YOU AREN'T GOING TO BELIEVE THIS
DOWNING OVER HERE
WHAT HAPPENED
HOW
THE DUDE'S ALIVE
DOWNING
OUT OF MY WAY
HE HEALED HIM
WHAT
I COULDN'T SEE
HOLY SHIT
HE'S
THAT LIGHT WAS LIKE AN EXPLOSION
WHO IS THIS GUY
CALL THE OFFICE NOW
WHERE'D HE COME FROM



WAS THAT THE COSTUME OR DID DOWNING DO THAT?
BOTH.
THAT'S WHY I WAS TRYING TO WARN YOU.*
THIS COMPLICATES OUR MISSION.
YA THINK?



HEY,
MITCH.
MARC
ROSEN
HERE.

LOOK--
YEAH, I KNOW
IT'S LATE. I JUST...
I'M LOOKING FOR
SOMETHING AND
I'VE ALREADY TRIED
THE COUNTY'S
ONLINE
DATABASE.

RIGHT, BUT
WE BOTH
KNOW THEIR
WEBSITE ISN'T
COMPLETELY
ACCURATE.

NO...NO,
I'M NOT SAYING
THAT. I'M JUST SAYING
IT ISN'T TOTALLY UP TO
DATE AND I KNOW THE
COURTS HAVE THEIR
OWN INTERNAL SYSTEM
FOR FILES. I JUST
THOUGHT YOU COULD
CHECK ON SOME-
THING FOR ME.

NO--
I DON'T NEED IT
THIS SECOND. BUT
I WAS HOPING YOU
COULD DIG INTO IT
AT YOUR OFFICE
TOMORROW.

IT'S NOT
LIKE I'M ASKING
YOU TO HACK NORAD,
JUST LOOKING FOR A
SIMPLE MARRIAGE
LICENSE.

CAN YOU DO
THIS FOR
ME?

WHAT'S
THAT?

YOU SAW
THE KARLENE
PHILLIPS SHOW?
YEAH,
HE'S THE GUY
I'M WORKING
WITH.

KINDA,
YEAH. I'M LIKE
HIS MANAGER
NOW. BUT SINCE YOU
SAW THE SHOW YOU
KNOW HE'S HAVING
TROUBLE GETTING
HIS LIFE BACK
TOGETHER...

WHAT?



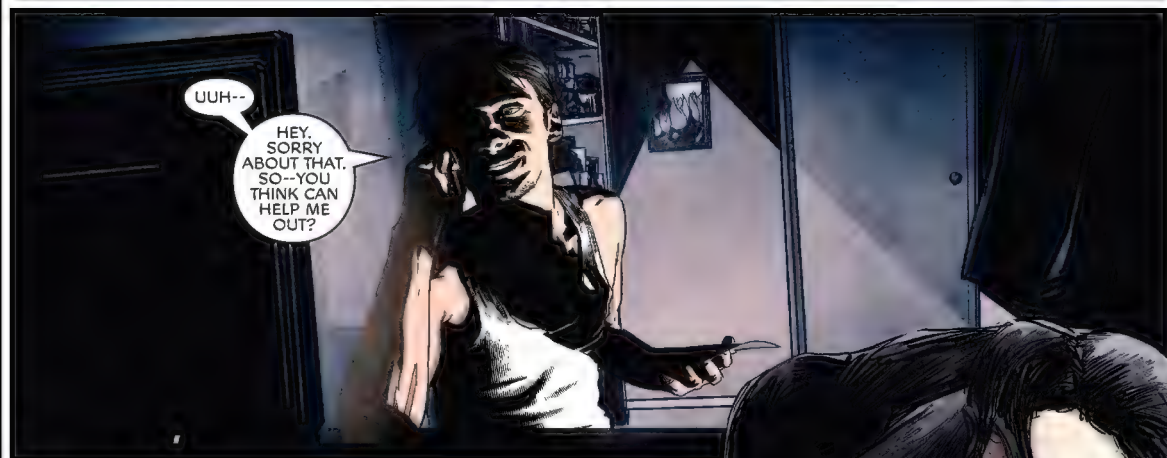
NO, I DIDN'T
SAY HE WAS MARRIED.
I SAID HE MAY HAVE
BEEN. I'M TRYING TO
FIND ANY RECORD OF--
um --COULD YOU
HOLD ON?

HEY--

YOU
ALMOST
DONE?

I WISH.
AFTER JIM
DROPPED *THIS*
BOMBSHELL ON
ME, I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO DIG UP
INFORMATION
FOR HIM. IT
MIGHT TAKE
AWHILE.

WAS HE
REALLY
MARRIED?





SARA,
GRAB MY
HAND!

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?

GETTING
US OUT
OF HERE!
NOW...

RUN!



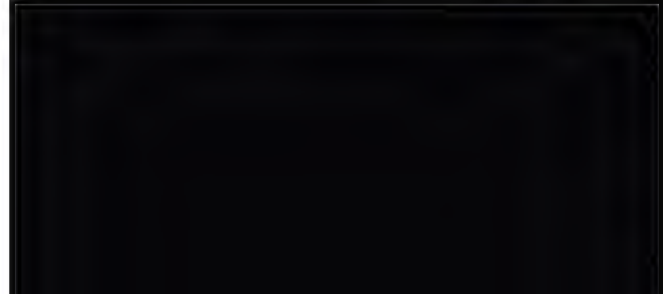
THE
POLICE--
WHAT
ABOUT
THEM?

I'M NOT
DEALING
WITH THAT
NOW!



I...YOU
NEED SLOW
DOWN!
YOU'RE
GOING TOO
FAST!

DO
YOU HEAR
ME?!



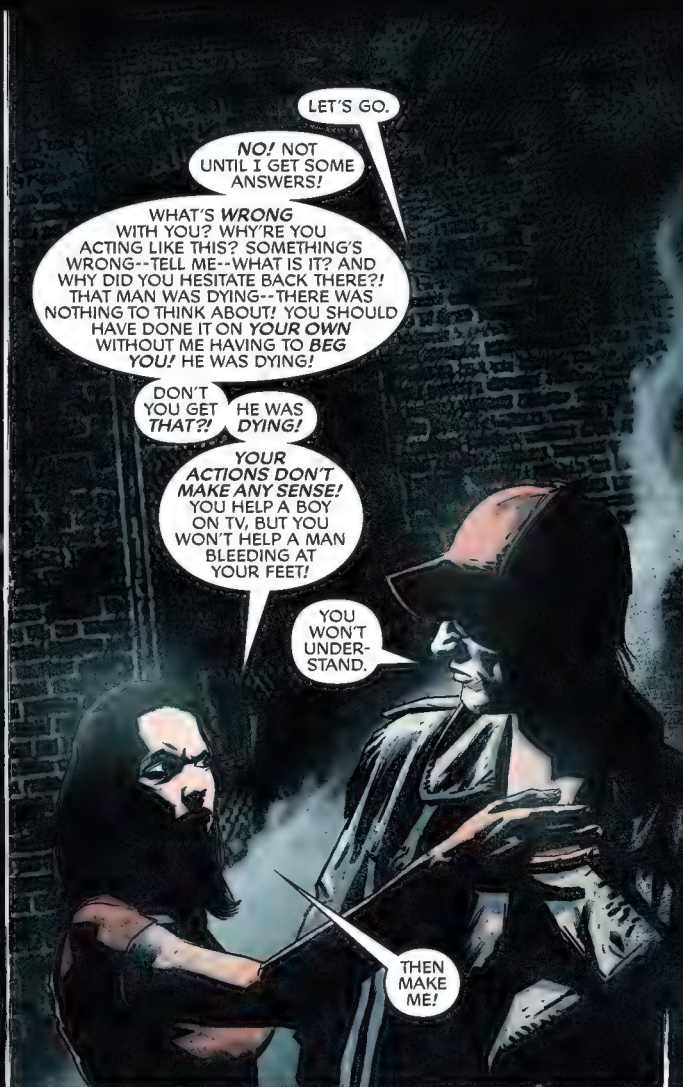
QUICK! IN
HERE! BEFORE
THEY COME
AROUND THE
CORNER!

JIM...
STOP...



QUIET!

THEY'LL
HEAR
US!



LET'S GO.

NO! NOT
UNTIL I GET SOME
ANSWERS!

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH YOU? WHY'RE YOU
ACTING LIKE THIS? SOMETHING'S
WRONG--TELL ME--WHAT IS IT? AND
WHY DID YOU HESITATE BACK THERE?!
THAT MAN WAS DYING--THERE WAS
NOTHING TO THINK ABOUT! YOU SHOULD
HAVE DONE IT ON *YOUR OWN*
WITHOUT ME HAVING TO *BEG*
YOU! HE WAS DYING!

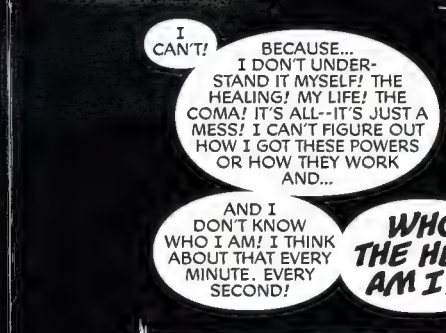
DON'T
YOU GET
THAT?!

HE WAS
DYING!

*YOUR
ACTIONS DON'T
MAKE ANY SENSE!
YOU HELP A BOY
ON TV, BUT YOU
WON'T HELP A MAN
BLEEDING AT
YOUR FEET!*

YOU
WON'T
UNDER-
STAND.

THEN
MAKE
ME!



I
CAN'T!

BECAUSE...
I DON'T UNDER-
STAND IT MYSELF! THE
HEALING! MY LIFE! THE
COMA! IT'S ALL--IT'S JUST A
MESS! I CAN'T FIGURE OUT
HOW I GOT THESE POWERS
OR HOW THEY WORK
AND...

AND I
DON'T KNOW
WHO I AM! I THINK
ABOUT THAT EVERY
MINUTE, EVERY
SECOND!

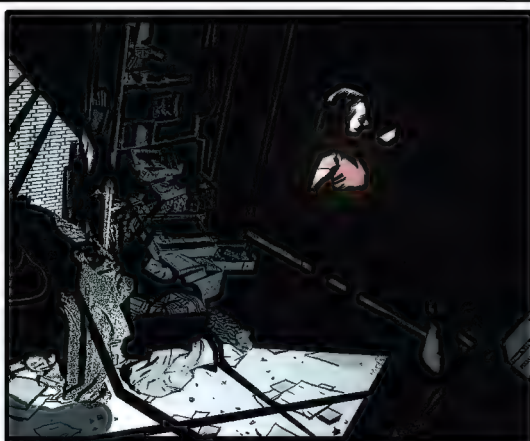
**WHO
THE HELL
AM I??!**



IT'S ALL
DRIVING ME
CRAZY!

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

YOU'RE
GOING
THROUGH A LOT.
I CAN'T BEGIN TO
IMAGINE WHAT THAT
MUST BE LIKE--BUT
YOU HAVE A GIFT. GOD'S
GIVEN YOU A GIFT. SOME-
THING SO SPECIAL...
SO MIRACULOUS...
YOU COULD
CHANGE THE
WORLD.









RELAX.
IT'S JUST
ME.

WHERE
THE HELL
YOU
BEEN?

AROUND.

YOU TOLD
ME WE HAD TO
BE CAREFUL--
HAD TO HIDE. AND
THEN YOU JUST
LEFT!

HAD
TO THINK
BUT I SEE
YOU
DIDN'T
TAKE MY
ADVICE.

WHICH
WAS?

ABOUT
HIDING.
DAYTIME TALK
SHOWS, PUBLIC
DISPLAYS OF
POWER--THOSE
AREN'T USUALLY
THE ACTIONS OF
SOMEONE MAKING
AN EFFORT TO
AVOID
OUTSIDE
ATTENTION.

THE SHOW
WAS JUST A WAY
TO MAKE MONEY.
AND WHAT HAPPENED
ON THE STREETS--I
DIDN'T HAVE A
CHOICE.

THAT'S
AN EXCUSE!
YOU ALWAYS
HAVE A
CHOICE.

I KEEP TELLING
YOU--YOU'RE A TARGET.
THAT SUIT. YOUR POWERS.
THEY WANT THEM--WANT TO
CONTROL THEM. AND NOW THAT
I THINK ABOUT IT--HIDING FROM
THE WORLD WOULD ONLY MAKE IT
EASIER FOR THEM--HEAVEN, HELL,
BOTH OF THEM WANT YOU TO BE
ALONE, WHERE THEY CAN ATTACK
WITHOUT ANYONE AROUND
TO WITNESS THEIR
ACTIONS.

SO I SAY...
SCREW 'EM! GO FOR
IT! BASK IN THE LIMELIGHT.
BECAUSE THE MORE EYES ON
YOU, THE HARDER IT'LL BE FOR
ANY OF THEM TO GET CLOSE
ENOUGH TO POSE ANY REAL
THREAT WITHOUT REVEALING
THEMSELVES.

AND
TRUST ME!...
THAT'S THE
LAST THING
THEY WANT
TO DO!

JUST DON'T
LET THE WORLD SEE
THIS SIDE OF YOU. DON'T
LET THEM KNOW JIM DOWNING
AND SPAWN ARE ONE AND THE
SAME. BECAUSE IF YOU DO--
THEY'LL TURN ON YOU. THIS
CULTURE HATES A SINNER,
JIMMY-BOY, AND THEY LOVE TO
TEAR DOWN THEIR SAINTS--
AND RIGHT NOW...
YOU'RE BOTH!

WHY
DON'T
THEY HUNT
YOU,
TOO?

THEY HAVE
BEEN. OFF AND
ON FOR
CENTURIES.

YES!--
DON'T BE SO
SURPRISED--YOU
DO THIS RIGHT AND
YOU CAN ALMOST
BECOME *IMMORTAL!*
BUT THE REASON THEY'RE
FOCUSED ON YOU, AND
NOT ME, IS OBVIOUS--
JUST LOOK AT ME! I'M
A SHORT, FAT, BALD
GUY! THEY EVENTUALLY
FIGURED I WASN'T A
THREAT TO THEM
ANYMORE.

I MEAN--
IT'S NOT LIKE
I CAN TURN
INTO A GIANT
MONSTER AND
TEAR PEOPLE'S
HEARTS
OUT!

BUT I CAN
GUIDE OTHERS.
SHOW THEM HOW TO
NOT MAKE THE SAME
MISTAKES I DID
THAT'S THE POWER
I HAVE LEFT.



HAVE YOU
EVER
WONDERED...



...HOW MANY EMPIRES
WE'VE SEEN FALL OVER THE
CENTURIES? THE ASSYRIANS, THE
MONGOLS, ALEXANDER, ROME,
SO MANY OTHERS.

ALL EVENTUALLY
FALTERED OR HAD THEIR
POWER BASES STRIPPED FROM
THEM. NONE WERE CAPABLE
OF HOLDING ONTO
THAT WHICH THEY HAD
CONQUERED.

INSTEAD
THEY FADED INTO
HISTORY.

BUT NOW-- WE'RE
AT A PRECIPICE. WE HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY TO FINALLY
ACCOMPLISH WHAT NONE OF
THOSE CIVILIZATIONS WERE
ABLE TO DO--TO CONTROL
OUR DESTINY!

THAT'S
WHY I'VE
CALLED
YOU
HERE...

ESSEX
HOUSE





...AND WHY I'VE RISKED PLACING YOU ONTO THE FIELD OF PLAY. DESPITE THE CAREFUL PLANNING BY OUR PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE, WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN AT A DISADVANTAGE WHEN FACED WITH THE SHEER MIGHT OF OUR ENEMIES.

WE COULDN'T COMPETE AGAINST HEAVEN'S OR HELL'S BLOATED ARMIES.

BUT THIS NEW HELLSPAWN--THIS JIM DOWNING--REPRESENTS OUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITY YET. I BELIEVE HIS POTENTIAL TO BE NEAR LIMITLESS.

MY PLAN IS TO MAKE HIM LOYAL TO OUR CAUSE. NOT THEIRS.

AS WE SAID EARLIER, BLUDD...



...THE GUY'S BECOMING SOMETHING OF A CELEBRITY. AND HIS STUNT TODAY ISN'T GOING TO HELP MATTERS.

TRASH

THIS MEDIA ATTENTION IS GOING TO TURN INTO A CIRCUS!

my bad.



SO, IF YOU WANT US TO TEST HIM, I RECOMMEND WE DO IT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.



THEN GO NOW--TONIGHT.

YOU WANT US TO NOTIFY THE CLOWN?

NO.

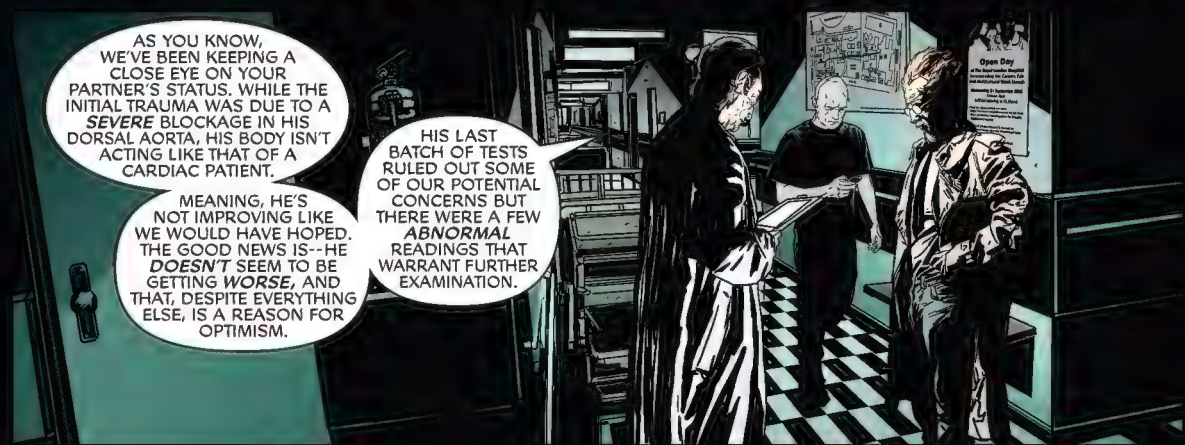
I'LL DEAL WITH HIM IF HE FINDS OUT.



MY BIGGER CONCERN IS THAT YOU SEE FOR YOURSELVES IF MR. DOWNING IS WORTHY OF OUR ATTENTION, OR IF HE'S JUST ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF MEANINGLESS "PAWNS."



DETECTIVE
WILLIAMS, THANK
YOU FOR YOUR
PATIENCE.



AS YOU KNOW,
WE'VE BEEN KEEPING A
CLOSE EYE ON YOUR
PARTNER'S STATUS. WHILE THE
INITIAL TRAUMA WAS DUE TO A
SEVERE BLOCKAGE IN HIS
DORSAL AORTA, HIS BODY ISN'T
ACTING LIKE THAT OF A
CARDIAC PATIENT.

MEANING, HE'S
NOT IMPROVING LIKE
WE WOULD HAVE HOPED.
THE GOOD NEWS IS--HE
DOESN'T SEEM TO BE
GETTING **WORSE**, AND
THAT, DESPITE EVERYTHING
ELSE, IS A REASON FOR
OPTIMISM.

HIS LAST
BATCH OF TESTS
RULED OUT SOME
OF OUR POTENTIAL
CONCERNS BUT
THERE WERE A FEW
ABNORMAL
READINGS THAT
WARRANT FURTHER
EXAMINATION.



OUR NEXT MOVE IS TO SEND THE RESULTS OUT TO A COUPLE OF SPECIALISTS TO GET THEIR OPINIONS.

DO WE HAVE TIME FOR THAT?

I BELIEVE SO. SINCE HE'S STABILIZED, THIS'LL BE OUR BEST OPPORTUNITY. I CAN'T MAKE ANY PROMISES HOW LONG THAT CONDITION WILL LAST, GIVEN THE NUMBER OF IRREGULAR READINGS WE'RE SEEING.

IT'S ALMOST LIKE HIS BODY IS RE-WIRING ITSELF...



"...AND WE DON'T KNOW WHY THAT WOULD BE HAPPENING."

BUT AS I SAID, MOST OF HIS OTHER VITALS SEEM TO BE NORMAL FOR A MAN HIS AGE AND WEIGHT. WHAT'S COMPLICATING MATTERS--AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE--IS DETECTIVE BURKE'S LACK OF PREVENTATIVE CARE.

SO WE'RE STILL TRYING TO DETERMINE WHETHER SOME OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF HIS HEART ATTACK OR SIMPLY A BY PRODUCT OF HIS UNHEALTHY DIET THROUGH THE YEARS.

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN STUBBORN THAT WAY.

WELL, I'D LIKE YOUR HELP IN FORCEFULLY RECOMMENDING HE CHANGE THOSE WAYS. ONCE HIS CONDITION IS STABILIZED, I'D HATE TO SEE HIM BACK HERE BECAUSE OF TOO MUCH FAST FOOD.



Capullo



UNDERSTOOD.

NOW GO HOME TO YOUR FAMILY. I'LL CALL YOU THE MINUTE WE HAVE ANY FURTHER NEWS.



HEY, KYLE--
I DIDN'T WAKE
YOU, DID I?

GOOD.
I...

WHAT? NO
WAY! I THOUGHT
YOU BROKE UP
WITH HER A
COUPLE MONTHS
AGO!

THAT SOUNDS
LIKE A NEUROTIC,
LOVESICK BACHELOR
TALKING. THAT'S NOT
WHY I CALLED,
THOUGH.

REMEMBER THAT
REPORT YOU DID
LAST YEAR ABOUT THE
GUY THAT DID FORENSIC
EVIDENCE TESTING?...NO,
NOT THE TALL BLONDE...
CHRIST! DO YOU EVER
GIVE IT A REST?--NO, I'M
TALKING ABOUT THE
OTHER GUY. THE ONE
THAT DID SOME
CARBON DATING ON
DOCUMENTS.



THAT'S
HIM!

YOU STILL
HAVE A CONTACT
FOR HIM? AND
WHAT WAS HIS
WEBSITE CALLED
AGAIN?



THINK
YOU CAN
FIND IT
AGAIN?--
GREAT!



OH. IT'S
JUST THIS GUY--
YOU KNOW, 'THE
HEALER'--HE GAVE
ME SOMETHING
AND I'M TRYING
TO SEE IF...

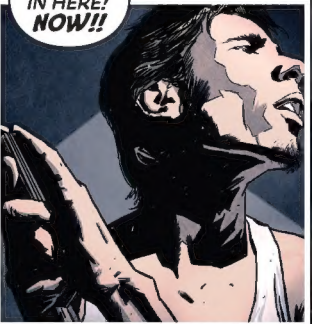
MARC!!

HANG
ON A SEC.

I'M ON
THE PHONE!
I'LL BE
DONE IN A
WHILE!



GET
YOUR ASS
IN HERE!
NOW!!



UM,
KYLE...

I'VE
GOTTA GO.
SUSAN'S
HAVING HER
PERIOD OR
SOME-
THING.

I REALLY
NEED THAT
INFO FIRST
THING
TOMORROW.
OKAY?



THANKS.



LIVE
CNR

...BEFORE POLICE COULD ARRIVE HE FLED ON FOOT. AUTHORITIES ARE STILL TRYING TO LOCATE HIM...



...BUT AS YOU'VE SEEN FROM THESE VIDEOS, THE MYSTERY OF JIM DOWNING CONTINUES TO ESCALATE.

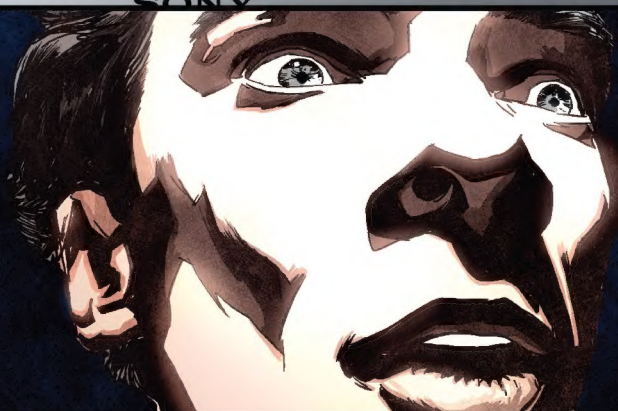
EYEWITNESSES HAVE ALL CONFIRMED WHAT SEEMS TO BE AN ACT OF IMPOSSIBLE MAGNITUDE! WE'LL STAY LIVE WITH THIS STORY AFTER THE BREAK, AS WE TALK TO EXPERTS REPRESENTING BOTH MEDICAL AND THEOLOGICAL VIEWPOINTS.



SAVIOR?

THIS...

...IS GOING TO BE HUGE!



TO BE CONTINUED...



Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE